IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Applicant: Kerry Clendinning et al.

Title: SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR COLLECTING, ASSOCIATING, NORMALIZING AND PRESENTING PRODUCT AND VENDOR INFORMATION ON A DISTRIBUTED NETWORK

Docket No.: 2043.061US1
Filed: December 7, 2000
Examiner: Samuel G. Rimell

Serial No.: 09/730,538
Due Date: July 29, 2007 (Sun.)
Group Art Unit: 2164

MS Appeal Brief - Patents
Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
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APPEAL BRIEF UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 41.37

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PATENT

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The Appeal Brief is presented in response to the Notice of Panel Decision from Pre-Appeal Brief Review mailed on June 12, 2007 and further in support of the Notice of Appeal to the Board of Patent Appeals and Interferences, filed on May 25, 2007, from the Final Rejection of claims 1-19, 21, 23-24 and 26 of the above-identified application, as set forth in the Final Office Action mailed on February 28, 2007.

The Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks is hereby authorized to charge Deposit Account No. 19-0743 in the amount of $500.00 which represents the requisite fee set forth in 37 C.F.R. § 41.20(b)(2). The Appellants respectfully request consideration and reversal of the Examiner's rejections of pending claims.

1. REAL PARTY IN INTEREST

The real party in interest of the above-captioned patent application is the assignee, Half.com Inc., as evidenced by the following:

An assignment from the inventors to Deja.com recorded December 7, 2000 at Reel 011452, Frame 0155.

An assignment from Deja.com to Half.com Inc., wholly owned by eBay Inc. of San Jose, California, recorded December 13, 2001 at Reel 012368, Frame 0273.

2. RELATED APPEALS AND INTERFERENCES

Other appeals known to Appellants that may have a bearing on the Board's decision in the present appeal may be accessed and reviewed via the following application numbers 09/731,019, 09/734,045, 09/412,893.

The Appellants know of no interferences that may have a bearing on the Board's decision in the present appeal.

3. STATUS OF THE CLAIMS

The present application was filed on December 7, 2000 with claims 1-22. In response to the non-final Office Action mailed February 6, 2004, claim 20 was canceled. In response to the Final Office Action mailed December 7, 2004, claims 23-26 were added. In response to the non-final Office Action mailed September 19, 2006, claims 22 and 25 were canceled. A Final Office Action (hereinafter "the Final Office Action") was mailed February 28, 2007. An amendment cancelling claims 23 and 24 pursuant to C.F.R. 41.33 is being mailed with the present appeal brief. Claims 1-19, 21, 23-24 and 26 stand twice rejected, remain pending, and are the subject of the present Appeal.

4. STATUS OF AMENDMENTS

In response to the Final Office Action mailed February 28, 2007, amendments were proposed to claims 1-4, 6, 10, 13 and 26; however, these proposed amendments were not entered, according the Advisory Action issued by the Examiner. Further, the status of entry of an amendment cancelling claims 23 and 24 pursuant to C.F.R. 41.33 is unknown- for the purposes of the present appeal, Appellants regard them as cancelled.

5. SUMMARY OF CLAIMED SUBJECT MATTER

INDEPENDENT CLAIM 1

Some aspects of the present inventive subject matter include, but are not limited to a system for storing and correlating various different identification and attribute information about a product (e.g., Figure 5, page 25, line 21 – page 27, line 7; page 9, lines 21-23), said system comprising:

a database (e.g., Figure 5, "storage device 420", page 25, lines 23-27; Figure 10; "name database 10"; page 18, line 15-page 25, line 20) to store a plurality of identifiers for each product, (e.g., Page 13, lines 23-25) and relationships between the identifiers (e.g., Page 17, line 31 – page 18, line 10), and for each identified product, a plurality of product attributes (e.g., Page 18, lines 18-21);

a data collector (e.g., Figure 5, "scraper programs 430", page 26, lines 6-7; page 11, lines 14-16; page 12, lines 4-19) to retrieve product information from at least one external source (e.g., Fig 1, "step 1010", page 11, line 1 – page 13, line 3) and automatically to associate said retrieved product information with prestored product information on the database (Id., e.g., Figure 1, "steps 1003 - 1004", page 15, line 3 – page 16, line 3), said retrieved product information includes a first attribute-value pair that includes a first attribute and a first value (e.g., Figure 1, "steps 1006-1010"; page 13, line 30 – page 15, line 2; page 16, line 4 – page 17, line 3); and

a normalization engine (e.g., Figure 5, "database engine 425", page 25, lines 26-29; page 14, lines 5-9; "normalization engine", page 14, line 6, page 17, line 27-30) to normalize said retrieved product information, the normalization engine to translate the first attribute to a second attribute responsive to an identification of the first attribute in a list that includes a plurality of attributes that are associated with the second attribute, the second attribute being a canonical representation of the plurality of attributes respectively (e.g., Figure 6, "step1008"; page 13, line 30 – page 15, line 2; page 16, line 4 – page 17, line 3).

INDEPENDENT CLAIM 10

Some aspects of the present inventive subject matter include, but are not limited to a method of storing product information in a database (e.g., Fig 1, "steps 1001-1011", page 11, line 1 – page 17, line 3), the method comprising:

gathering product information from diverse external sources (e.g., Fig 1, "step 1001", page 11, line 1 – page 13, line 3);

loading the gathered product information into the database (e.g., Fig 1, "step 1002", page 11, lines 14-18; page 15, lines 4-6), the gathered product information including a first attribute-value pair that includes a first attribute and a first value (e.g., Figure 1, "steps 1006-1010"; page 13, line 30 – page 15, line 2; page 16, line 4 – page 17, line 3);

for each product in the gathered product information, determining whether the product is already present in said database (e.g., Figure 1, "step 1003"; page 15, lines 3-16), and if so, translating the first attribute to a second attribute responsive to identifying the first attribute in a list that includes a plurality of attributes that are associated with the second attribute, the second attribute being a canonical representation of the plurality of attributes respectively (e.g., Figure 6, "step 1008"; page 13, line 30 – page 15, line 2; page 16, line 4 – page 17, line 3); and

for each product determined as not being already present in said database, adding a product identifier and related product information to said database (e.g., Figure 6, "step 1005"; page 15, line 27 – page 16, line 3), the database to determine and to store relationships between the various product identifiers for each new product represented in newly gathered information and stores information regarding the related product information for that product according to alias lists for product information terminology stored in said database (e.g., Figure 5, "storage device 420", page 25, lines 23-27; Figure 10; "name database 10"; page 18, line 15 - page 25, line 20).

INDEPENDENT CLAIM 12

Some aspects of the present inventive subject matter include, but are not limited to a computer-implemented method for providing to a user at a single user-interactive location information relating to at least one of a product and a service of interest to the user (e.g., Figure 5, page 25, line 21 – page 27, line 7; page 9, lines 21-23), the method comprising:

gathering information on at least one of the product and the service, including at least two of the following types of information (e.g., Fig 1, "step 1001", page 11, line 1 – page 13, line 3):

a general description of the at least one of the product and the service that includes at least one of the product features and the service features (e.g., page 8, lines 18-30),

a numerical user rating of the at least one of product and the service (Id.),

at least one of the user reviews of the at least one of the product and the service (Id.),

at least one of an industry review of the at least one of the product and the service (Id.),

at least one of the comparison between the at least one of the product and the service and other similar items (Id.),

a list of at least one of the vendor that sells the at least one of the product and the service (Id.),

a list price of the at least one of the product and the service (Id.),

a price for the at least one of the product and the service at each of the at least one vendor (Id.),

data on the availability of the at least one of the product and the service at each of the at least one vendor (Id.),

a profile on each of the at least one vendor (Id.), and

an at least one of a rating and a review for each of the at least one vendor (Id.);

storing the gathered information according to an at least one of the product identification and the service identification (e.g., page 18, lines 17-18; Figure 5, "storage device

420", page 25, lines 23-27; Figure 10; "name database 10"; page 18, line 15-page 25, line 20; page 13, lines 23-25; page 9, lines 21-32), the information includes a first attribute-value pair that includes a first attribute and a first value (e.g., Figure 1, "steps 1006-1010"; page 13, line 30 – page 15, line 2; page 16, line 4 – page 17, line 3), the storing including translating the first attribute to a second attribute responsive to identifying the first attribute in a list that includes a plurality of attributes that are associated with the second attribute, the second attribute being a canonical representation of the plurality of attributes respectively (e.g., Figure 6, "steps 1008"; page 13, line 30 – page 15, line 2; page 16, line 4 – page 17, line 3); and

outputting said information to said user in a format that enables access by said user to the gathered and the stored information related to the at least one of the product of interest and the service of interest (e.g., Figure 5, "display device 480"; Figures 6, 7A-C, pages 27, line 8 – page 28, line 7).

INDEPENDENT CLAIM 26

Some aspects of the present inventive subject matter include, but are not limited to a system for storing and correlating various different identification and attribute information about a product (e.g., Figure 5, page 25, line 21 – page 27, line 7; page 9, lines 21-23), said system comprising:

a first means (e.g., Figure 5, "storage device 420", page 25, lines 23-27; Figure 10; "name database 10"; page 18, line 15-page 25, line 20) for storing a plurality of identifiers for each product, (e.g., Page 13, lines 23-25) and relationships between the identifiers (e.g., Page 17, line 31 – page 18, line 10), and for each identified product, a plurality of product attributes (e.g., Page 18, lines 18-21);

a second means (e.g., Figure 5, "scraper programs 430", page 26, lines 6-7; page 11, lines 14-16; page 12, lines 4-19; page 14, lines 5-9; page 11, lines 19-29; page 11, line 29 – page 12, line 3; page 12, line 19) for retrieving product information from at least one external source (e.g., Figure 1, "step 1001", page 11, line 1 – page 13, line 3) and automatically to associate said retrieved product information with prestored product information on the first means (Id., e.g., Figure 1, "steps 1003-1004", page 15, line 3 – page 16, line 3) said retrieved product information includes a first attribute-value pair that includes a first attribute and a first value (e.g., Figure 1, "steps 1006-1010"; page 13, line 30 – page 15, line 2; page 16, line 4 – page 17, line 3); and

a third means (e.g., Figure 5, "database engine 425", page 25, lines 26-29; page 18, lines 11-14) for normalizing said retrieved product information, the third means for translating the first attribute to a second attribute responsive to an identification of the first attribute in a list that includes a plurality of attributes that are associated with the second, the second attribute being a canonical representation of the plurality of attributes respectively (e.g., Figure 6, "step1008"; page 13, line 30 – page 15, line 2; page 16, line 4 – page 17, line 3).

This summary does not provide an exhaustive or exclusive view of the present subject matter, and Appellant refers to each of the appended claims and its legal equivalents for a complete statement of the invention.

6. GROUNDS OF REJECTION TO BE REVIEWED ON APPEAL

§102 Rejection of the Claims

Claims 1-19, 21, 23-24 and 26 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) for anticipation by Perkowski (U.S. 5,950,173; hereinafter Perkowski).

Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection of claims 1-19, 21 and 26 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) is defective for the reason that Perkowski does not disclose each and every limitation of the claim 10, as amended, of their present application.

7. ARGUMENT

A) The Applicable Law under 35 U.S.C. §102(b)

A claim is anticipated only if each and every element as set forth in the claim is found, either expressly or inherently described, in a single prior art reference.

M.P.E.P § 2131.

To anticipate a claim, a reference must disclose every element of the challenged claim and enable one skilled in the art to make the anticipating subject matter.

PPG Industries, Inc. V. Guardian Industries Corp., 75 F.3d 1558, 37 USPQ2d 1618 (Fed. Cir. 1996).

The identical invention must be shown in as complete detail as is contained in the claim.

Richardson v. Suzuki Motor Co., 868 F.2d 1226, 1236, 9 USPQ2d 1913, 1920 (Fed. Cir. 1989).

B) *The rejection of the independent claims of the present application is improper under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) for the reason that Perkowski fails to disclose every element of the independent claims*

Appellant believes that the issue of patentablity over Perkowski can best be understood with regard to claim 10 which is representative of the other independent claims which are also believed to be distinguishable from Perkowski for substantially similar reasons.

Claim 10 includes the following limitations:

...the gathered product information including a first attribute-value pair that includes a first attribute and a first value; ...

....translating the first attribute to a second attribute responsive to identifying the first attribute in a list that includes a plurality of attributes that are associated with the second attribute, the second attribute being a canonical representation of the plurality of attributes respectively.

The Final Office Action highlights the following in Perkowski which fails to describe gathering product information including a first attribute-value pair that includes a first attribute and translating the first attribute to a second attribute responsive to identifying the first attribute in a list that includes a plurality of attributes that are associated with the second attribute, the second attribute being a canonical representation of the plurality of attributes respectively.:

> "Registering Consumer Products With The IPI Finding and Serving Subsystem
>
> The utility of the product finding functionalities of the system of the present invention depends in large part of the number of consumer-products registered with the IPI Finding and Serving Subsystem thereof. In principle, numerous techniques may be employed separately and in combination with each other in order to construct the IPI and Non-IPI Registrant Databases supported by the IPD Servers of the present invention. Five such tecnhiques will be detailed below.
>
> According to a first database construction technique, the administrator of the IPI Registrant Database would transmit Product Registration Requests (PRRs) in the form of electronic documents to each and every the manufacturer having been issued, for example, a six digit UPC Manufacturer Identification Number (MIN) by the UCC, Inc. Such electronic documents can be transmitted using conventional MIME protocols such as, for example, STMP. The Product Registration Request document would seek to ascertain from the manufacturers the various information items (including the menu of URLs) identified in the IPI Registrant Database of FIG. 4A1. In response to the Product Registration Request, each solicited manufacturer would send back to the administrator of the IPI Registrant Database (for each of its consumer products) its UPC number and a menu of URLs indicating the location of the information resources identified in the Product Registration Request document. This information can then be used to readily construct the IPI Registrant Database of the illustrative embodiment.

> According to a second database construction technique, a global advertising campaign would be launched (over various media) in order to solicit the various information elements identified in the IPI Registrant Database of FIG. 4A1 and thus register the products of the manufacturers selling UPC-labelled products. Preferably, such information would be collected by way of an electronic document transfer subsystem set-up to cooperate with the system of the present invention in order to facilitate database construction operations.
>
> According to a third database construction technique, the IPI system itself would continuously solicit consumer product registrations over time in order to collect information from companies responding favorably to the solicitations. While such solicitation efforts can involve the issuance of product registration requests using various types of media, it is preferred that the information collection operations are carried out using electronic document transfer techniques described hereinabove.
>
> According to a fourth database construction technique, a number of commercial on-line Internet search engines, such as Altavista.TM., Yahoo.TM., WebCrawler.TM., Lycos.TM., Excite.TM., as well as powerful off-line parallel-processing processing search engines, would be enlisted to analyze (i.e. mine) information on the World Wide Web in order to collect and link the information elements specified in the IPI Registrant Database of FIG. 4A1.
>
> Once an "initial" IPI Registrant Database has been constructed using any one or more of the four database construction techniques described hereinabove, manufacturers registered therewith can be periodically contacted using Web-based electronic document (i.e. message) transfer techniques in order to request updating and confirmation of the UPC/URL listings contained within the database of the IPI subsystem of the present invention[1].

The above quote from Perkowski describes the registration of products in an Internet Product-Information (IPI) (Col. 6, line 4) subsystem. Specifically, the above quote from Perkowski describes four database construction techniques that may be used to register products in an IPI registrant database (Figure 4A1).

---

[1] Perkowski, Col. 24, line 57 – Col. 25, line 54.

According to the first database construction technique, the administrator of the IPI Registrant Database sends a Product Registration Request to a manufacturer. In response, the manufacturer sends back a list of products. Each product in the list is identified by a Universal Product Number (UPC) (Abstract) and a list of URLs that are used to construct the IPI Registrant Database.

According to the second database construction technique, the administrator of the IPI Registrant Database presumably uses an advertisement campaign to solicit information elements in the IPI Registrant Database "and thus register the products of the manufacturers selling UPC-labeled products" (Col. 25, line 25).

According to a third database construction technique, the IPI System solicits product registrations from companies.

According to a fourth database construction technique, an on-line Internet search engine (e.g., Yahoo™) analyzes information on the World Wide Web in order to collect and link information in the IPI Registrant Database (Figure 4A1).

Claim 10 requires gathering product information including a first attribute-value pair that includes a first attribute and translating the first attribute to a second attribute responsive to identifying the first attribute in a list that includes a plurality of attributes that are associated with the second attribute, the second attribute being a canonical representation of the plurality of attributes respectively. For example, in one example use scenario, product information that is gathered may include a first attribute-value pair, "screen_size = xga." Continuing with the example, the attribute "screen_size" may be translated to a second attribute, "display_res," responsive to identifying "screen_size" in a list that includes multiple attributes (e.g., "screen_size", "Screen Size", "display res", etc.), the second attribute, "display res" being a canonical representation of the respective multiple attributes (e.g., "screen_size", "Screen Size", "display res", etc.) (Application, pages 14 - 16).

The above quote from Perkowski upon which the Office Action relies, describes subject matter that fails to anticipate the elements of the limitations of the claim 10. Specifically, none of the above quotes describe gathering product information including a first attribute-value pair that includes a first attribute and translating the first attribute to a second attribute responsive to

identifying the first attribute in a list that includes a plurality of attributes that are associated with the second attribute, the second attribute being a canonical representation of the plurality of attributes respectively.

For example, the first database construction technique from Perkowski relates to receiving a list of products that are respectively identified with a Universal Product Number (UPC) and a list of URLs. A UPC is not an attribute-value pair. A URL is not an attribute-value pair. Accordingly, the first quote from Perkowski cannot describe translating an attribute of an attribute-value pair because the first quote fails to describe an attribute-value pair. Moreover the first quote further fails to describe a translation of the attribute of the attribute-value pair, a translation that is responsive to an identification of the first attribute in a list, or any of the other remaining requirements of claim 10.

The second database construction technique quote relates to a solicitation of information elements. Information elements are not attribute-value pair(s). Indeed, claim 10 requires an attribute-value pair to include "a first attribute" and "a first value." Accordingly, any assertion that an information element contains "a first attribute" and "a first value" is mere speculation. Moreover, the second quote further fails to anticipate the remaining requirements of claim 10.

The third database construction technique relates a solicitation of product registrations. The third quote fails to describe the product registration. Presumably, a product registration facilitates the registration of a product. Nevertheless, the third quote cannot possibly describe an attribute-value pair much less distinguish between "a first attribute" and "a first value" because the third quote fails to describe that which causes the product to be registered. Moreover, the third quote fails to describe the remaining requirements of claim 10.

Finally, the fourth database construction technique relates a collection and linkage of information elements that are specified in the IPI Registrant Database of FIG. 4A1. In applying the description of the Perkowski fourth database construction technique to Appellant's claim 10, the Final Office Action states the following:

> For products that are already in the database, col. 25, lines 47-54 describe a procedure where product information, such as the URL, can be updated. FIG. 4A2 illustrates a column (third from left) where the updated URL information is held. A second column (first from left) has the original URL. Accordingly, FIG. 4A2 establishes a representation

of data (a table) that includes new attribute information (updated URL) related to an alias (original URL). This relationship between the updated URL and original URL can be defined as an attribute value paring. The registrant's name can be a second attribute. The second attribute is a canonical representation of the other attributes in the sense that it is an alternative representation associated with the other attributes and is made in accordance with a canon (a relation, such as a relational table).[2]

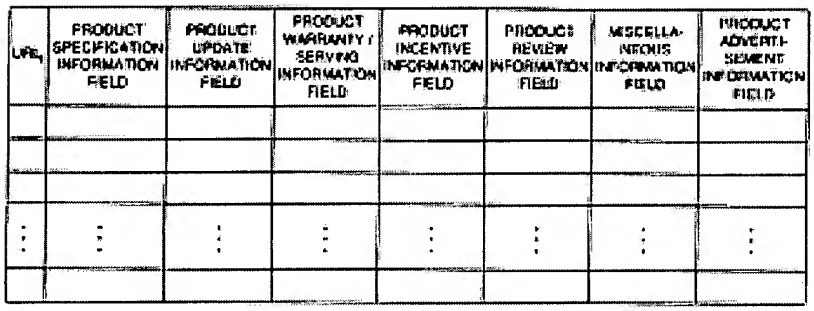

FIG. 4A2

Perkowski, Figure 4A2

Applicants submit that the above quote from the Final Office Action fails to appreciate the meaning of the term "attribute" as described by the application. Appellant's application states the following:

> In an implementation of a relational database, a relation corresponds to a table having rows, where each row corresponds to a tuple, and columns, where each column corresponds to an attribute. From a practical standpoint, rows represent records of related data and columns identify 10 individual data elements. A table defining a retailer's product line may, for example, have product names, product numbers (e.g., Stock Keeping Units or SKUs), prices and other product features. Each row of this table holds data for a single product and each column holds a single 15 attribute, such as a product name.[3]

As confirmed by the above quote from Appellant's application, the "updated URL" of Perkowski is not "an attribute" as claimed in claim 10. As defined in the application "each column corresponds to an attribute" such that "each row ...holds data for a single product and each

[2] Final Office Action, Page 6
[3] Application, Page 4, lines 5-35

column holds a single attribute, such as a product name." Indeed, as confirmed by the quotes from Appellant's patent specification, neither the "updated URL" nor the "original URL" may be said to be attributes within the meaning of Apellant's claims. Moreover, the relationship between the "updated URL" and the "original URL" cannot be said to be an "attribute->value" pairing because neither the "updated URL" nor the "original URL" are attributes. Broadly speaking, the above quote of Perkowski that was incorporated in the Final Office Action fails to properly identify an attribute, as claimed.

Even if one were to assume that the "updated URL" and the "original URL" is an attribute-value pairing. It is clear that the portion of Perkowski relied upon in the Final Office Action still fails to describe: 1) the construed attribute-value pair as being translated to a second attribute, or 2) a translating that is responsive to an identifying the first attribute in a list, or 3) a list that includes a plurality of attributes that are associated with the second attribute, or 4) the second attribute being a canonical representation of the plurality of attributes respectively. Accordingly, the portion of Perkowski relied upon and construed by the Final Office Action fails to anticipate claim 10 because such an interpretation does not anticipate the requirements of the claim 10.

The Final Office Action further states[4] that the claims "do not elaborate on the nature of the translation." Applicants respectfully disagree.

Claim 10 requires two attributes, a first attribute and a second attribute. Claim 10 further requires the second attribute to be a canonical representation of a list of attributes that includes the first attribute. Finally, claim 10 requires the translation of the first attribute to the second attribute responsive to the first attribute being identified in the list of attributes. Applicants submit that the independent claims do indeed clearly recite the limitations of the translation.

In summary, Perkowski fails to anticipate the above quoted limitations because Perkowski it does not describe "gathering product information including a first attribute-value pair that includes a first attribute and translating the first attribute to a second attribute responsive to identifying the first attribute in a list that includes a plurality of attributes that are associated

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with the second attribute, the second attribute being a canonical representation of the plurality of attributes respectively".

Thus , Perkowski fails to disclose each and every limitation of claim 10, as required to support a rejection of this claim under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e).

The above remarks are also applicable to a consideration of independent claims 1, 12, and 26.

Claims 2-9 depend on independent claim 1. Claim 11 depends on independent claim 10. Claims 13-19 and 21 depend on independent claim 12. Claim 25 depends on independent claim 24. As dependent claims are deemed to include all limitation of claims from which they depend, the rejection of claims 2-9, 11, 13-19 and 21 under 35 U.S.C. § 102 is also addressed by the above remarks, and the amendments contained herein.

8. SUMMARY

For the reasons above, the claims 1-19, 21 and 26 were not properly rejected under § 102(b) as being unpatentable over Perkowski.

It is respectfully submitted that Perkowski does not render the independent claims of the present application anticipated and that the claims are patentable over the cited Perkowski. Reversal of the rejection and allowance of the pending claim are respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

KERRY CLENDINNING et al.

By their Representatives,

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Date 7.30.2007 By Mark R. Vatuone
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Name Peter Rebuffoni Signature

CLAIMS APPENDIX

1. A system for storing and correlating various different identification and attribute information about a product, said system comprising:

a database to store a plurality of identifiers for each product, and relationships between the identifiers, and for each identified product, a plurality of product attributes;

a data collector to retrieve product information from at least one external source and automatically to associate said retrieved product information with prestored product information on the database, said retrieved product information includes a first attribute-value pair that includes a first attribute and a first value; and

a normalization engine to normalize said retrieved product information, the normalization engine to translate the first attribute to a second attribute responsive to an identification of the first attribute in a list that includes a plurality of attributes that are associated with the second attribute, the second attribute being a canonical representation of the plurality of attributes respectively.

2. The system of claim 1, wherein the identifiers are selected from a group including:

at least one of a model number associated with a manufacturer and other identifiers used by the manufacturer;

at least one of a part number associated with a distributor and other identifier used by the distributor;

at least one of an SKU associated with a vendor and other identifier used by the vendor; and

a serial number.

3. The system of claim 1, wherein the database further stores information about features of the product.

4. The system of claim 1, wherein the database is utilized to assign a universal SKU to each product.

5. The system of claim 1, wherein the database is a relational database and the relationships between the identifiers is stored as a tuple.

6. The system of claim 5, wherein the database is controlled by SQL.

7. The system of claim 1, wherein said database is contained in a server connected to a distributed network.

8. The system of claim 2, wherein the distributed network is the Internet.

9. The system of claim 8, further comprising at least one third party server connected to the system through the Internet.

10. A method of storing product information in a database, the method comprising:

gathering product information from diverse external sources;

loading the gathered product information into the database, the gathered product information including a first attribute-value pair that includes a first attribute and a first value;

for each product in the gathered product information, determining whether the product is already present in said database, and if so,

translating the first attribute to a second attribute responsive to identifying the first attribute in a list that includes a plurality of attributes that are associated with the second attribute, the second attribute being a canonical representation of the plurality of attributes respectively; and

for each product determined as not being already present in said database, adding a product identifier and related product information to said database, the database to determine and to store relationships between the various product identifiers for each new product represented in newly gathered information and stores information regarding the related product information for that product according to alias lists for product information terminology stored in said database.

11. The method of claim 10, further comprising:

transmitting the product information to a third-party server, wherein the transmitted product information contains a product identifier used by the third-party server.

12. A computer-implemented method for providing to a user at a single user-interactive location information relating to at least one of a product and a service of interest to the user, the method comprising:

gathering information on at least one of the product and the service, including at least two of the following types of information:

a general description of the at least one of the product and the service that includes at least one of the product features and the service features,

a numerical user rating of the at least one of product and the service,

at least one of the user reviews of the at least one of the product and the service,

at least one of an industry review of the at least one of the product and the service,

at least one of the comparison between the at least one of the product and the service and other similar items,

a list of at least one of the vendor that sells the at least one of the product and the service,

a list price of the at least one of the product and the service,

a price for the at least one of the product and the service at each of the at least one vendor,

data on the availability of the at least one of the product and the service at each of the at least one vendor,

a profile on each of the at least one vendor, and

an at least one of a rating and a review for each of the at least one vendor;

storing the gathered information according to an at least one of the product identification and the service identification, the information includes a first attribute-value pair that includes a first attribute and a first value, the storing including translating the first attribute to a second attribute responsive to identifying the first attribute in a list that includes a plurality of attributes that are associated with the second attribute, the second attribute being a canonical representation of the plurality of attributes respectively; and

outputting said information to said user in a format that enables access by said user to the gathered and the stored information related to the at least one of the product of interest and the service of interest.

13. The method of claim 12, further comprising:

displaying a list identifying a plurality of the at least one of the products and the services; and

receiving a user product input selecting the at least one of the products and the services from the list, wherein the displaying information displays information on the selected at least one of the products and the services.

14. The method of claim 13, further comprising:

displaying a class list identifying a plurality of classes of the at least one of the products and the services;

receiving a user class input selecting one of the classes from the class list, and

displaying the at least one of the products and the services corresponding to the selected class.

15. The method of claim 13, further comprising:

displaying a feature list identifying a plurality of the at least one of the product features and the service features;

receiving a user feature input selecting the at least one of the product features and service features from the feature list; and

displaying the at least one of the product feature and the service feature corresponding to the user feature input.

16. The method of claim 13, wherein displaying further comprises displaying a picture.

17. The method of claim 12, further comprising:

allowing the user to add to the stored information a user review of the at least one of the product and the service.

18. The method of claim 12, further comprising:

allowing the user to add a rating of the at least one of the product and the service, wherein the rating is combined with an existing numerical user rating to form a new numerical user rating.

19. The method of claim 12, further comprising at least one evaluation of the at least one user review.

21. The method of claim 10, further comprising:

assigning unique integer identifiers to each character string contained in said product information;

associating each unique integer identifier with its corresponding string in a look-up table; and

creating a file containing product identification information and product attribute information in the form of a listing of said unique integer identifiers;

the assigning, the associating, and the creating to enable a traversal across said file with client queries to said database, a retrieval of relevant integer identifiers, and the acquisition of corresponding character strings from said look-up table for presentation to a client.

26. A system for storing and correlating various different identification and attribute information about a product, said system comprising:

a first means for storing a plurality of identifiers for each product, and relationships between the identifiers, and for each identified product, a plurality of product attributes;

a second means for retrieving product information from at least one external source and automatically to associate said retrieved product information with prestored product information on the first means said retrieved product information includes a first attribute-value pair that includes a first attribute and a first value; and

a third means for normalizing said retrieved product information, the third means for translating the first attribute to a second attribute responsive to an identification of the first attribute in a list that includes a plurality of attributes that are associated with the second, the second attribute being a canonical representation of the plurality of attributes respectively.

EVIDENCE APPENDIX

None.

RELATED PROCEEDINGS APPENDIX

None.